

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended) A method according to claim 14, comprising identifying the further picture of the sequence that [[can]] is to be used as an alternative reference picture for the current picture or said part of the current picture by comparing at least part of the default reference picture or the current picture with at least one further picture of the sequence to calculate a measure of similarity between the default reference picture or the current picture and each of said at least one further picture and, if the measure of similarity calculated using a particular further picture meets a pre-determined criterion, outputting an indicator identifying the particular further picture as a picture of the sequence that [[can]] is to be used as an alternative reference picture for the current picture or said part of the current picture.

2. (Currently amended) A method according to claim 14, comprising forming a prediction of at least part of the current picture from a first default reference picture and a second default reference picture for the current picture, said first default reference picture occurring temporally before the current picture and said second default reference picture occurring temporally after the current picture, comparing at least part of the first default reference picture or the current picture with at least one further picture of the sequence occurring temporally before the current picture to calculate a measure of similarity between the first default reference picture or the current picture and each of said at least one further picture and, if the measure of similarity calculated using a particular further picture meets a pre-determined criterion, outputting an indicator identifying the particular further picture as a

picture of the sequence that ~~[[can]]~~ is to be used as an alternative reference picture for the current picture or said part of the current picture.

3. Cancelled (without prejudice or disclaimer)

4. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim ~~[[3]]~~, comprising comparing at least part of the default reference picture or the current picture with a plurality of further pictures, outputting an indicator for each further picture that meets the predetermined criterion thereby providing more than one indicator for the current picture or said part of the current picture, the method further comprising ranking the further pictures that meet the predetermined criterion and providing their associated indicators with the current picture or said part of the current picture in order of rank, the further picture having the closest similarity to the default reference picture or current picture being placed first.

5. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 14, wherein the indicator is included in a picture header of the encoded video signal.

6. (Currently amended) A method according to claim 14, wherein the sequence of video pictures is encoded according to the H.263 video compression standard and the indicator is included in ~~supplemental enhancement information~~ the Supplemental Enhancement Information in accordance with the H.263 video compression standard.

7-8. Cancelled (without disclaimer or prejudice).

9. (Currently amended) A method of decoding an encoded video signal representing a sequence of pictures, the encoded video signal ~~[[have]]~~ having been encoded by forming a prediction of at least part of a current picture from a default reference picture for the current picture and ~~further including~~ providing an indicator ~~provided~~ for the current picture or a ~~[[said]]~~ part of the current picture, the indicator identifying a further picture of the

sequence that ~~[[can]] is to be used~~ by a video decoder as an alternative reference picture for the current picture or said part of the current picture when the video decoder is unable to decode the default reference picture ~~decoding the encoded video signal~~, the method comprising:

receiving ~~[[an]] a part of the~~ encoded video signal representing ~~[[a]] the~~ current picture and, when the decoder is unable to decode the default reference picture ~~[[of]]~~ for the current picture, examining ~~[[said]] the~~ indicator provided for the current picture or ~~[[a]] said~~ part of the current picture, and decoding the current picture or said part of the current picture with reference to the alternative reference picture identified by said indicator.

10. (Currently amended) A video encoder for forming an encoded video signal, comprising an input for receiving a video signal representing a sequence of pictures and a predictive coder, the predictive coder being arranged to form a prediction of at least part of a current picture of the sequence from a default reference picture for the current picture, the encoder being arranged to provide an indicator for the current picture or a part of the current picture identifying a further picture of the sequence that ~~[[can]] is to be used~~ by a video decoder as an alternative reference picture for the current picture or said part of the current picture when ~~decoding the encoded video signal~~ the video decoder is unable to decode the default reference picture.

11. (Currently amended) A video decoder comprising an input for receiving an encoded video signal representing a sequence of pictures, the encoded video signal ~~including pictures that have~~ having been encoded by forming a prediction of at least ~~[[a]]~~ part of a current picture from a default reference picture for the current picture and ~~further including providing~~ an indicator ~~provided~~ for the current picture or ~~[[said]] a~~ part of the current picture,

the indicator identifying a further picture of the sequence that [[can]] is to be used by the video decoder as an alternative reference picture for the current picture or said part of the current picture when the video decoder is unable to decode the default reference picture decoding the encoded video signal, the decoder being arranged to receive [[an]] a part of the encoded video signal representing [[a]] the current picture and, when the decoder is unable to decode the default reference picture [[of]] for the current picture, the decoder is arranged to examine the [[said]] indicator provided for the current picture or said part of the current picture, and to decode the current picture or said part of the current picture with reference to the alternative reference picture identified by said indicator.

12. (Currently amended) A radio telecommunications device including at least one of a video encoder for forming an encoded video signal and a video decoder, wherein said video encoder comprises: an input for receiving a video signal representing a sequence of pictures and a predictive coder, the predictive coder being arranged to form a prediction of at least part of a current picture of the sequence from a default reference picture for the current picture, the encoder being arranged to provide an indicator for the current picture or a part of the current picture identifying a further picture of the sequence that [[can]] is to be used by a video decoder as an alternative reference picture for the current picture or said part of the current picture when ~~decoding the encoded video signal~~ the video decoder is unable to decode the default reference picture; and wherein said video decoder comprises: an input for receiving an encoded video signal representing a sequence of pictures, the encoded video signal ~~including pictures that have~~ having been encoded by forming a prediction of at least [[a]] part of [[the]] a current picture from [[the]] a default reference picture for the current picture and providing an indicator for the current picture or a part of the current picture, the

indicator identifying a further picture of the sequence that is to be used by the video decoder as an alternative reference picture for the current picture or said part of the current picture when the video decoder is unable to decode the default reference picture, the decoder being arranged to receive ~~[[the]]~~ a part of the encoded video signal representing the current picture wherein, when the decoder is unable to decode the default reference picture ~~[[of]]~~ for the current picture, the decoder is arranged to examine ~~[[an]]~~ the indicator provided for the current picture or said part of the current picture, ~~the indicator identifying a further picture of the sequence that can be used as an alternative reference picture for the current picture or a part of the current picture~~ and to decode the current picture or said part of the current picture with reference to ~~said further picture~~ the alternative reference picture identified by said indicator.

13. Cancelled (without disclaimer or prejudice).

14. (Currently amended) A method of encoding a video signal representing a sequence of pictures to form an encoded video signal, the method comprising forming a prediction of at least part of a current picture of the sequence from a default reference picture for the current picture and providing an indicator for the current picture or a part of the current picture, the indicator identifying a further picture of the sequence that ~~[[can]]~~ is to be used by a video decoder as an alternative reference picture for the current picture or said part of the current picture when ~~decoding the encoded video signal~~ the video decoder is unable to decode the default reference picture.

15. (Currently amended) A method according to claim 14, wherein if the indicator is associated with a part of the current picture ~~[[frame]]~~, ~~[[it]]~~ the indicator is included in a picture segment header or a macroblock header of the encoded video signal.

16. (Currently amended) A method according to claim 14, wherein the indicator identifying a further picture as a picture of the sequence that [[can]] is to be used as an alternative reference picture for the current picture or said part of the current picture indicates the temporal reference of the further picture.

17. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 14, wherein alternative reference pictures are provided for B pictures and P pictures.

18. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 14, wherein alternative reference pictures are provided only for P pictures.

19. (Currently amended) A method according to claim 1 [[or 2]], wherein the measure of similarity is a sum of absolute differences calculated using differences in pixel values between the default reference picture and a further picture.

20. (Currently amended) A method according to claim 1 [[or 2]], wherein the similarity between the default reference picture and a further picture is assessed using picture histograms.

21. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 14, wherein the video signal is encoded as a scalable video sequence and alternative reference pictures are provided for predictively encoded enhancement layer pictures of the scalable video sequence.

22. (Currently amended) A method according to claim 14, wherein the indicator is provided with the current picture or part of the current picture.

23. Cancelled (without disclaimer or prejudice)

24. (Currently amended) A method according to claim 9, comprising examining more than one indicator provided for the current picture or said part of the current picture, each of said more than one indicator identifying a further picture of the sequence that can be

used as an alternative reference picture for the current picture or said part of the current picture when the video decoder is unable to decode the default reference picture, wherein when more than one indicator is provided for the current picture or part of the current picture, the indicators are ordered in the encoded video signal according to rank, the indicator identifying the picture having the closest similarity to the default reference picture or current picture being first in the order of rank, the decoding method further comprising using the further pictures identified by the indicators as alternative reference pictures for the current picture or said part of the current picture in order of rank.

25. (Currently amended) A method according to claim 9, comprising obtaining the indicator ~~or indicators~~ from a picture header of the encoded video signal.

26. (Currently amended) A method according to claim 9, comprising obtaining the indicator ~~or indicators~~ from a picture segment header or a macroblock header of the encoded video signal.

27. (Currently amended) A method according to claim 9, comprising obtaining the indicator ~~or indicators~~ from Supplemental Enhancement Information of a video sequence encoded according to the H.263 video compression standard.

28. (Currently amended) A method according to claim 9, wherein the indicator identifying a further picture as a picture of the sequence that ~~[[can]]~~ is to be used as an alternative reference picture for the current picture or said part of the current picture indicates the temporal reference of the further picture.

29. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 9, wherein alternative reference pictures are provided for B pictures and P pictures.

30. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 9, wherein alternative reference pictures are provided only for P pictures.

31. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 9, wherein the video signal is encoded as a scalable video sequence and alternative reference pictures are provided for predictively encoded enhancement layer pictures of the scalable video sequence.

32. (Currently amended) A video encoder according to claim 10, wherein the video encoder is arranged to identify a further picture of the sequence that ~~[[can]]~~ is to be used as an alternative reference picture for the current picture or said part of the current picture by comparing at least part of the default reference picture or the current picture with at least one further picture of the sequence to calculate a measure of similarity between the default reference picture or the current picture and each of said at least one further picture and, when the measure of similarity calculated using a particular further picture meets a pre-determined criterion, to output an indicator identifying the particular further picture as a picture of the sequence that ~~[[can]]~~ is to be used as an alternative reference picture for the current picture or said part of the current picture.

33. (Currently amended) A video encoder according to claim 10, wherein the predictive coder is arranged to form a prediction of at least part of the current picture from a first default reference picture and a second default reference picture for the current picture, said first default reference picture occurring temporally before the current picture and said second default reference picture occurring temporally after the current picture, and the encoder is arranged to compare at least part of the first default reference picture or the current picture with at least one further picture of the sequence occurring temporally before the current picture to calculate a measure of similarity between the first default reference picture

or the current picture and each of said at least one further picture and, if the measure of similarity calculated using a particular further picture meets a predetermined criterion, to output an indicator identifying the particular further picture as a picture of the sequence that ~~[[can]]~~ is to be used as an alternative reference picture for the current picture or said part of the current picture.

34. Cancelled (without prejudice or disclaimer)

35. (Currently amended) A video encoder according to claim ~~[[34]]~~ 10, wherein the video encoder is further arranged to compare at least part of the default reference picture or the current picture with a plurality of further pictures, to output an indicator for each further picture that meets the predetermined criterion thereby to provide more than one indicator for the current picture or said part of the current picture, wherein the video encoder is further arranged to rank the further ~~alternative~~ pictures that meet the predetermined criterion and provide their associated indicators ~~[[for]]~~ with the current ~~[[frame]]~~ picture or said part of the current picture in order of rank, the further picture having the closest similarity to the default reference picture or current picture being placed first.

36. (Currently amended) A video encoder according to claim 10, wherein the video encoder is arranged to include the indicator ~~or indicators~~ in a picture header of the encoded video signal.

37. (Currently amended) A video encoder according to claim 10, wherein if the indicator is provided for a part of the current ~~[[frame]]~~ picture, the video encoder is arranged to include ~~[[it]]~~ the indicator in a picture segment header or a macroblock header of the encoded video signal.

38. (Currently amended) A video encoder according to claim 10, wherein the video sequence is encoded according to the H.263 video compression standard and the video encoder is arranged to include the indicator in the Supplemental Enhancement Information in accordance with the H.263 video compression standard.

39. (Currently amended) A video encoder according to claim 10, wherein the video encoder is arranged to use the temporal reference of the further picture as the indicator identifying a further picture as a picture of the sequence that [[can]] is to be used as an alternative reference picture for the current picture or said part of the current picture.

40. (Previously presented) A video encoder according to claim 10, wherein the video encoder is arranged to provide alternative reference pictures for B pictures and P pictures.

41. (Previously presented) A video encoder according to claim 10, wherein the video encoder is arranged to provide alternative reference pictures only for P pictures.

42. (Currently amended) A video encoder according to claim 32 ~~or 33~~, wherein the video encoder is arranged to determine the measure of similarity as a sum of absolute differences calculated using differences in pixel values between the default reference picture and a further picture.

43. (Currently amended) A video encoder according to claim 32 ~~or 33~~, wherein the video encoder is arranged to assess the similarity between the default reference picture and a further picture using picture histograms.

44. (Previously presented) A video encoder according to claim 10, wherein the video encoder is arranged to encode the video signal as a scalable video sequence and to provide alternative reference pictures for predictively encoded enhancement layer pictures.

45. (Currently amended) A video encoder according to claim 10, wherein the encoder is arranged to provide the indicator with the current picture or part of the current picture.

46. Cancelled (without prejudice or disclaimer)

47. (Currently amended) A video decoder according to claim 46, wherein the video decoder is arranged to examine more than one indicator provided for the current picture or said part of the current picture, each of said more than one indicator identifying a further picture of the sequence that can be used as an alternative reference picture for the current picture or said part of the current picture when the video decoder is unable to decode the default reference picture, and wherein when more than one indicator is provided for the current picture or part of the current picture, the indicators are ordered in the encoded video signal according to rank, the indicator identifying the picture having the closest similarity to the default reference picture or current picture being placed first in the order of rank, the video decoder being further arranged to use the further pictures identified by the indicators as alternative reference pictures for the current picture or said part of the current picture in order of rank.

48. (Previously presented) A video decoder according to claim 11, wherein the video decoder is arranged to obtain the indicator from a picture header of the encoded video signal.

49. (Previously presented) A video decoder according to claim 11, wherein the video decoder is arranged to obtain the indicator from a picture segment header or a macroblock header of the encoded video signal.

50. (Previously presented) A video decoder according to claim 11, wherein the video decoder is arranged to obtain the indicator from Supplemental Enhancement Information of a video sequence encoded according to the H.263 video compression standard.

51. (Currently amended) A video decoder according to claim 11, wherein the indicator identifying a further picture as a picture of the sequence that ~~[[can]]~~ is to can be used as an alternative reference picture for the current picture or said part of the current picture indicates the temporal reference of the further picture.

52. (Previously presented) A video decoder according to claim 11, wherein the video decoder is arranged to decode a scalably encoded video sequence in which alternative reference pictures are provided for predictively encoded enhancement layer pictures of the scalably encoded video sequence.

53. (Currently amended) A multimedia terminal device including at least one of a video encoder for forming an encoded video signal and a video decoder, wherein said video encoder comprises: an input for receiving a video signal representing a sequence of pictures and a predictive coder, the predictive coder being arranged to form a prediction of at least part of a current picture of the sequence from a default reference picture for the current picture, the encoder being arranged to provide an indicator for the current picture or a part of the current picture identifying a further picture of the sequence that ~~[[can]]~~ is to be used by a video decoder as an alternative reference picture for the current picture or said part of the current picture when ~~decoding the encoded video signal~~ the video decoder is unable to decode the default reference picture; and wherein said video decoder comprises: an input for receiving an encoded video signal representing a sequence of pictures, the encoded video signal ~~including pictures that have~~ having been encoded by forming a prediction of at least ~~[[a]]~~ part of a

current picture from a default reference picture for the current picture and providing an indicator for the current picture or a part of the current picture, the indicator identifying a further picture of the sequence that is to be used by the video decoder as an alternative reference picture for the current picture or said part of the current picture when the video decoder is unable to decode the default reference picture, the decoder being arranged to receive ~~[[an]]~~ a part of the encoded video signal representing ~~[[a]]~~ the current picture wherein, when the decoder is unable to decode the default reference picture ~~[[of]]~~ for the current picture, the decoder is arranged to examine ~~[[an]]~~ the indicator provided for the current picture or said part of the current picture, ~~the indicator identifying a further picture of the sequence that can be used as an alternative reference picture for the current picture or a part of the current picture~~ and to decode the current picture or said part of the current picture with reference to ~~said further picture~~ the alternative reference picture identified by said indicator.

54. (Currently amended) An encoded video signal representing a sequence of pictures, the encoded video signal ~~including pictures that have~~ having been encoded by forming a prediction of at least part of a current picture of the sequence from a default reference picture for the current picture, the encoded video signal further including an indicator provided for the current picture or a part of the current picture, the indicator identifying a further picture of the sequence that ~~[[can]]~~ is to be used by a video decoder as an alternative reference picture for the current picture or said part of the current picture when ~~decoding the encoded video signal~~ the video decoder is unable to decode the default reference picture.

55. Cancelled (without prejudice or disclaimer)

56. (Previously presented) An encoded video signal to according to claim [[55]] 54, including more than one indicator provided for the current picture or said part of the current picture, each of said more than one indicator identifying a further picture of the sequence that can be used as an alternative reference picture for the current picture or said part of the current picture when the video decoder is unable to decode the default reference picture, wherein the indicators are included in the encoded video signal according to an order of rank, the indicator identifying the picture having the closest similarity to the default reference picture or current picture being first in the order of rank.

57. (Previously presented) An encoded video signal according claim 54, wherein the indicator is included in a picture header of the encoded video signal.

58. (Previously presented) An encoded video signal according claim 54, wherein the indicator is included in a picture segment header or a macroblock header of the encoded video signal.

59. (Currently amended) An encoded video signal according to claim 54, wherein the sequence of video pictures is encoded according to the H.263 video compression standard and the indicator is included in the Supplemental Enhancement Information in accordance with the H.263 video compression standard.

60. (Currently amended) An encoded video signal according to claim 54, wherein the indicator identifying a further picture as a picture of the sequence that [[can]] is to be used as an alternative reference picture for the current picture or said part of the current picture indicates the temporal reference of the further picture.

61. (Previously presented) An encoded video signal according claim 54, wherein alternative reference pictures are provided for B pictures and P pictures.

62. (Previously presented) An encoded video signal according to claim 54, wherein alternative reference pictures are provided only for P pictures.

63. (Previously presented) An encoded video signal according to claim 54, wherein the video signal is encoded as a scalable video sequence and alternative reference pictures are provided for predictively encoded enhancement layer pictures of the scalable video sequence.